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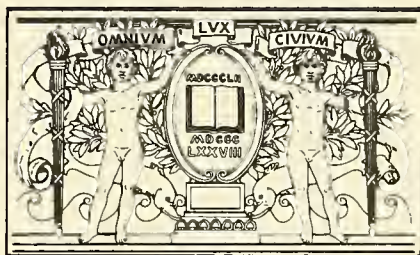
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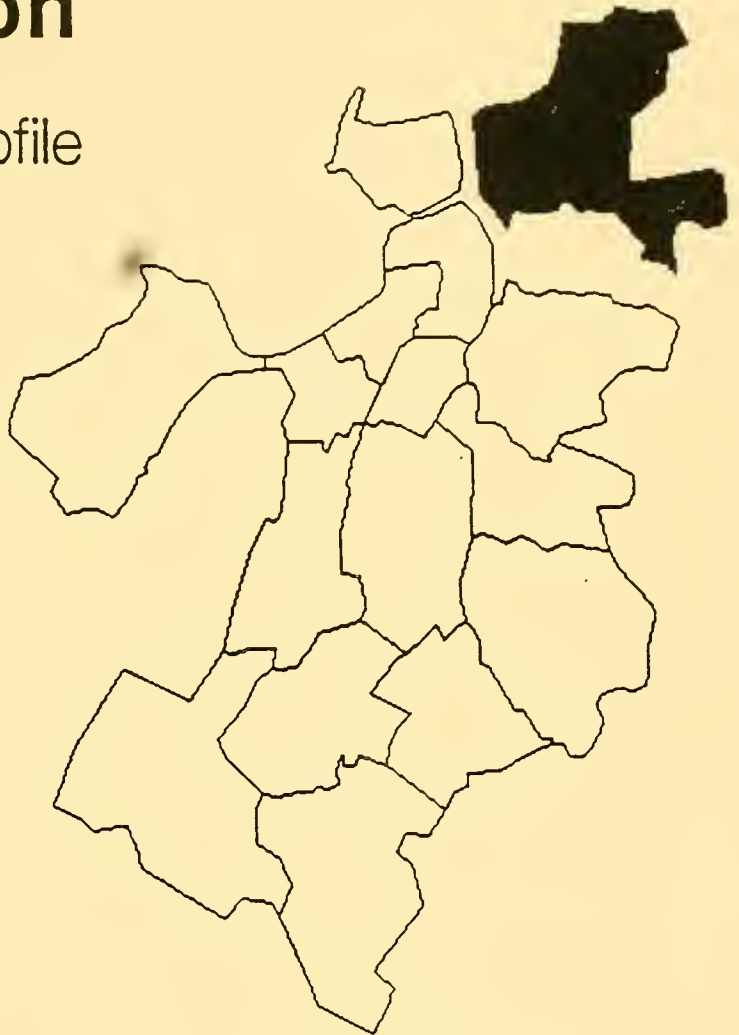
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# East Boston

## Neighborhood Profile

1988



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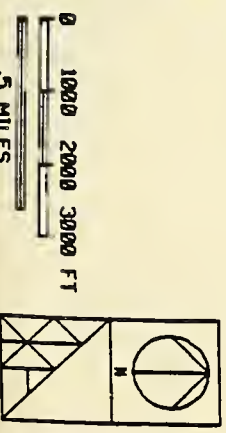
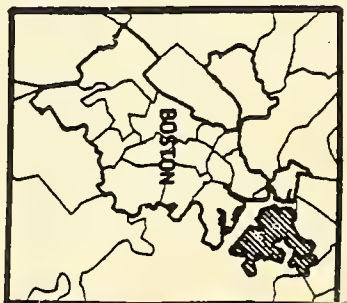
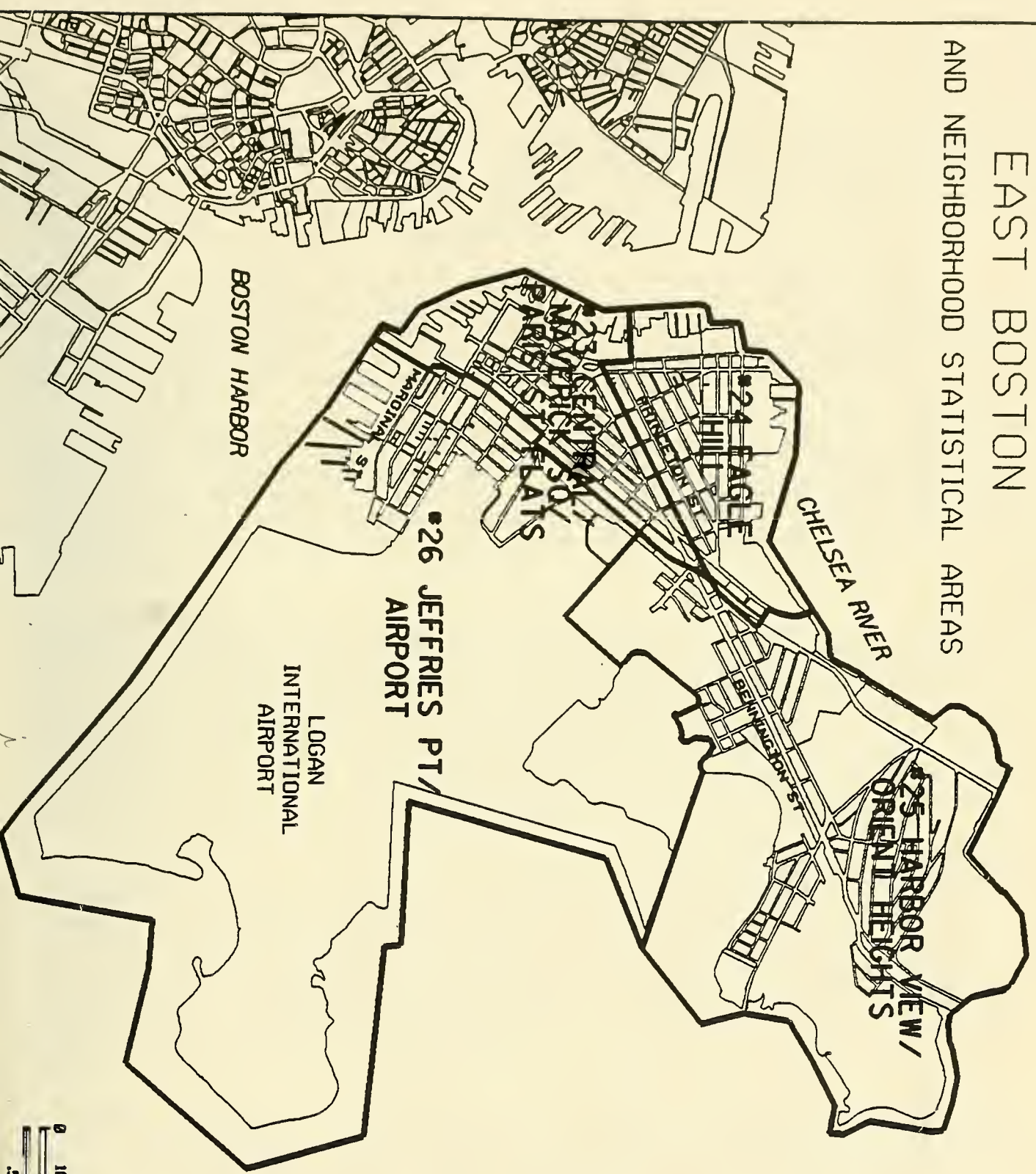
Kane Simonian, Secretary





# PLANNING DISTRICT #1 EAST BOSTON

AND NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICAL AREAS





## EAST BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

### Introductory Overview

From 1835 to 1915, East Boston developed as an industrial and shipping community where goods were transferred between ships and trains that connected to all of the manufacturing centers of New England. The major physical changes since 1915 have been the growth of transportation facilities, particularly the tunnels, McClellan Highway and Logan Airport to accommodate regional needs.

East Boston is now faced with adapting the physical environment which it has inherited to the needs of a modern residential community. The decline of the neighborhood's total population from a level of 60,000 in 1930 has stabilized around 33,000 persons. From 1960 until 1985, the greatest increase has been in elderly persons and the greatest decrease has been in youth from 0 to 14 years old.

East Boston is a stable, predominantly Italian Catholic neighborhood. It is a tightly knit family-oriented community where people have pride in their neighborhood and where many people's lives are deeply rooted. The area's housing is predominantly owner-occupied, 1-3 family homes. Older housing in the Maverick Square, Eagle Hill, and Jeffries Point neighborhoods is in need of major renovations. In recent years, its convenient location and relatively lower housing costs have attracted new Asian immigrants.

### I. Neighborhood History

Noodle's Island was annexed to the city of Boston in 1637, but remained an isolated agricultural community supplying fresh meat and wood to the city for nearly 200 years. In 1833, General William Sumner organized the East Boston Company which bought the island, changed its name and established a ferry service to the downtown. The Company began to develop waterfront oriented industrial uses and provide railroad service to the north. East Boston was also promoted in this period as a summer resort. An orderly grid pattern of streets was laid out, the 80 room Maverick House hotel was constructed in Maverick Square and fine houses with hilltop views of the harbor were built in the Eagle Hill and Jeffries Point areas. Many of these remain today.

From 1840 to 1865, the needs of international shipping spurred the rapid development of East Boston. Donald McKay brought fame to the area with his "Yankee Clippers," among them the Flying Cloud, which were constructed, outfitted, and sailed to California, the East Indies and China. The Boston terminal for England's Cunard Steamship Lines was established in East Boston in 1840, opening the way for waves of immigrants and increased trade. The ability to transfer goods directly from ship to railroad was an important asset and the addition of a terminal for the Grand Junction Railroad gave East Boston direct connections to all the manufacturing centers of New England.

Population climbed from 1,455 persons in 1840 to 20,572 in 1865, with large homes being developed on the hills and more modest dwellings in the area around Maverick Square. The decline of wooden shipbuilding caused the exodus of skilled craftsmen at a time when many Irish immigrants were arriving to take their place. Housing was made available by subdividing existing housing and constructing tenements. As the population continued to grow, wealthier families began to leave.

Around 1880, Breed's Island, now the Orient Heights section of East Boston, was opened to development of more expensive, single family homes. The pace of development was slow and the last lots were not sold off until 1912. Successive waves of immigrants, primarily Jews and then Italians, pushed the population of East Boston to a peak level of around 60,000 which was maintained from 1916 through 1935.





After 70 years of ferry service, East Boston was connected to downtown by a subway tunnel in 1905. Further transportation development, the airport in 1923 and the Sumner Tunnel in 1934 planted the seeds for future problems when the rapid expansion of aviation and postwar suburban development caused tremendous growth in the use of these facilities. Commuter and airport traffic provided the primary reasons for the development, from 1949 to 1964, of airport access roads, the expressway through East Boston and the Callahan Tunnel. The introduction of jet aircraft during the 1960's added noise to East Boston's problems.

Table Ia. Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980

	1950 -----	1960 -----	1970 -----	1980 -----
Population	51,152 (6.4)	43,809 (6.3)	38,873 (6.1)	32,178 (5.7)
Housing units	13,943 (6.3)	13,989 (5.9)	13,709 (5.9)	14,552 (6.0)
Persons/unit	3.7	3.1	2.8	2.2

Note: figures in brackets are percent of Boston total.

See section at end of profile describing sources, as well as the methodology.

Source: a)

## II. Demographics

Although East Boston lost nearly 19,000 in population between 1950 and 1980 due largely to declining household size, it has recently stabilized and even regained some population in the 1980s. The median age of its residents, 34.7 years, is relatively high, and with 29 percent 55 years old or over, East Boston makes up in elderly what it lacks in persons between 15 and 35 years of age.

Table IIa. Population, 1985\*

	Total -----	Population in group quarters -----	Household population -----	Persons per household -----
East Boston	32,956	613	32,344	2.4
City of Boston	601,095	49,595	551,500	2.4

\* Note difference between total population and household population. Most of the following tables refer to household population as explained in the end notes for source b).

Table IIb. Age Composition of Household Population, 1985  
(in percent)

	Median age -----	0-14 -----	15-24 -----	25-34 -----	35-54 -----	55+ -----
East Boston	34.7 yrs	15	19	17	21	29
City of Boston	28.8 yrs	17	23	22	20	18

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Except for some recent Asian and Hispanic immigrants, East Boston is almost all white, 92 percent.



Table IIc. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Household Population, 1985  
(in percent)

	White, not Hispanic	Black	Hispanic*	Asian	Other races
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	92	0	3	5	1
City of Boston	62	25	7	5	1

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

\* Hispanic includes self-designated Hispanics plus those who speak Spanish in the home or were born in a Spanish-speaking country

In 1985, household composition closely mirrored the city averages. East Boston had slightly more single parents and single person households, and relatively fewer households composed of unrelated individuals.

Table IIId. Household Composition, 1985  
(in percent)

	Traditional families and couples	Single parent households	Single person household	Household of unrelated individuals
	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	35	19	37	9
City of Boston	36	16	34	14

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

### III. Income and Poverty

East Boston residents had a lower median household income than the average for the city in 1984. In terms of portion in poverty, East Boston has increased in poverty between 1979 and 1984, particularly its unrelated persons.

Table IIIa. Median Household Income and Portion in Poverty in 1979 and 1984

	Median household income		Percent in poverty			
	1979	1984	1979 all persons	1984 all persons	1984 all families	1984 unrelated persons
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	\$11,153	\$13,800	17	27	22	22
City of Boston	12,530	19,250	20	21	22	17

Source: b)

### IV. Mobility and Migration

East Boston, with 79 percent of its residents born within Massachusetts, is second only to South Boston in retaining its own, and it is close to West Roxbury in that 36 percent of its households have remained in the same house for 16 years or longer.





Table IVa. Place of Birth of 1985 Residents  
(in percent)

	Massachusetts	Other U.S. and Canada	Europe	Elsewhere
	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	79	8	6	7
City of Boston	55	25	5	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Table IVb. Years in Dwelling Unit of 1985 Household Residents  
(in percent)

	<2	2-5	6-10	11-15	16+
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	16	21	16	10	36
City of Boston	28	27	16	10	19

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

V. Employment

Labor force participation of residents over 16 years of age, at 54 percent, was below the city norm, and unemployment, at 9 percent, was also considerably higher -- due largely to East Boston's older population. Its employed residents were overrepresented in manufacturing, trade, financial and real estate jobs, and self-employment and other occupations were also high, but unusually few were engaged in services.

Table Va. Labor Force Status, Spring 1985  
(in percent)

	Participation rate (Persons aged 16 yrs +)	Unemployment rate
	-----	-----
East Boston	54	9
City of Boston	66	6

Source: b)

Table Vb. Industry of Resident Workers, 1985  
(in percent)

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.*	Services	Gov't	Other
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
East Boston	20	20	12	19	10	19
City of Boston	14	16	8	36	11	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

\* F.I.R.E. is an abbreviation for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.



In 1983 there were 19,500 jobs located in East Boston, with a heavy emphasis on services, trades, and construction. East Boston's employment base has changed substantially over the last twenty years. In the early 1960's, East Boston's specialty was manufacturing of wood products, apparel, electric and electronic equipment, as well as ship building and repair. Logan Airport has affected East Boston for years with its expansion program, making air transportation the largest employer in the neighborhood. However, less than 5 percent of East Boston's resident work force was employed in transportation in 1985.

While the neighborhood's manufacturing base has diminished to less than half of its size of twenty years ago, East Boston still had a large proportion of blue collar workers in 1985, most of whom found work outside of the neighborhood.

Table Vc. Employment Located Within Neighborhood, 1983

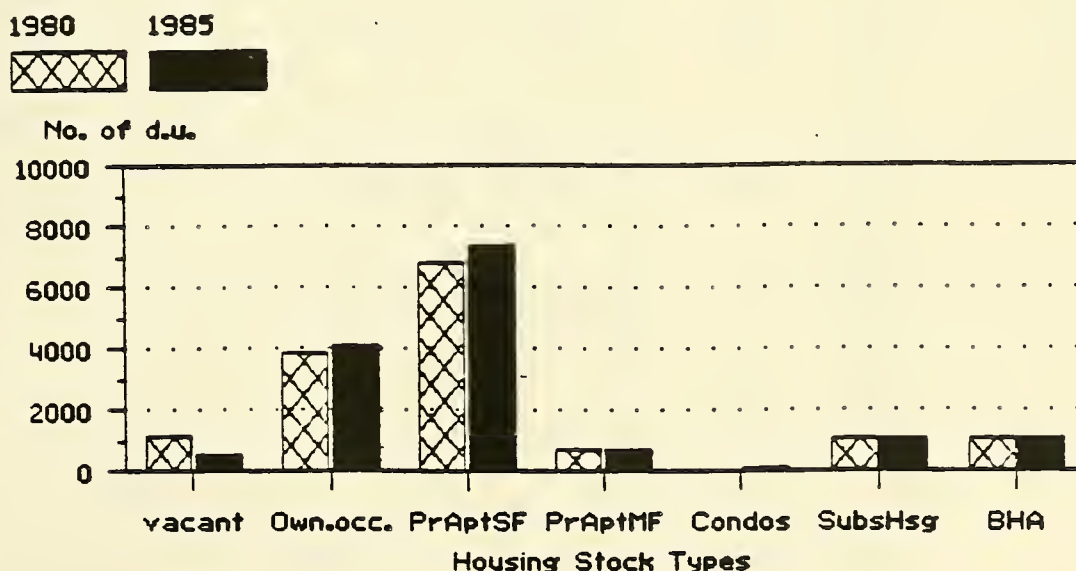
	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.	Services	Gov't	Other
East Boston	2,600	4,100	200	5,100	1,600	5,900
City of Boston	48,900	81,000	78,800	171,000	91,500	58,100

Source: c)

#### VI. Housing

Private rental housing, mainly in triple-deckers, makes up over half of East Boston's housing stock, with another 14 percent equally distributed between older public housing and more recent assisted rental housing. The balance, 28 percent, are owner occupied units in its triple-deckers and singles.

Although the housing market has tightened since 1980, East Boston's median rent and median housing values still remained well below the city average in 1985, attracting industrious immigrants.

Table VIa. Housing Stock Composition by Structure Types, 1980 and 1985  
(in dwelling units)



=====										
EAST BOSTON	:	Private Housing	and	Condos	:	Assisted Housing	:	R: PDA8085	:	
Stock type:	:	1-4 vacant	Own. occ.	PrAptSF	PrAptMF	CondoSF	CondoMF	SubsHsg	BHA	Total
1-4(SF)/5+(MF)	:	1-4(SF)	1-4(SF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	Mixed	5+(MF)	Mixed
=====										
1980	:	9% 1,116	3,814	6,769	735	0	0	1,056	1,069	14,559
% of pl. dist.	:	8	26	46	5	0	0	7	7	100
=====										
1985	:	4% 484	4,130	7,347	662	18	112	1,056	1,069	14,878
% of pl. dist.	:	3	28	49	4	0	1	7	7	100
=====										
change '80-'85	:	(632)	316	578	(73)	18	112	0	0	319
% chg from '80	:	(57)	8	9	(10)	inf	inf	0	0	2
=====										

Source: c)

Table VIb. 1-3 Family Property Values and Median Gross Rents, 1980 and 1985

	1-3 family property values		Median monthly gross rents	
	1979	1985	1980	1985
East Boston	\$28,000	\$ 87,000	\$208	\$320
City of Boston	32,000	115,000	254	400

Source: b)

VII. Transportation

The means of getting to work of East Boston residents mirrored citywide patterns, with 47 percent using a vehicle, and 37 percent using the convenient MBTA Blue Line. However, 45 percent of the households do not own a vehicle, slightly more than the city average.

Table VIIa. Means of Household Transportation to Work, 1985  
(in percent)

	Vehicle	MBTA	Walk	Other
East Boston	47	37	16	0
City of Boston	50	33	15	3

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Table VIIb. Number of Vehicles Owned per Household, 1985  
(in percent)

	None	1	2	3 or more
East Boston	45	41	12	2
City of Boston	39	42	14	5

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)



## VII. Summary of Recent and Imminent Development

Development activity in East Boston between 1975 and 1989 is anticipated to total \$354.6 M (million), according to source e). Nearly one-third of of this investment or \$111.1 M will be spent to develop the transportation and parking sector which is primarily a result of Logan Airport.

Residential development is second in East Boston with an investment of \$92.7 M, which is one-fourth of the total investment. This spending will have resulted in the creation of 1,402 new dwelling units, and the renovation of an additional 134 units during this period. This new housing will consist of 869 rental units, 301 Boston Housing Authority units, 118 owner-occupied units, 45 congregate units, and 69 unclassified units. In addition, 100 lodging house rooms will be developed.

Industrial development accounts for an additional \$90.8 M, or one-fourth of total investment. This investment will have produced a total of 1.5 M square feet of new and renovated industrial space, which will have created 1,090 new jobs and retained 378 existing jobs. The 990,000 SF Massachusetts Technology Center at Massport's Bird Island Flats is the major industrial project. It will be completed in two phases in 1984 and 1988.

Other significant East Boston developments include \$28.8 M in office construction which has produced 250,000 SF of office space and a 270 room hotel at Logan Airport which added \$26 M to the total investment picture.







Sources and Methodology

a) - *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980*

b) - *B.R.A. and P.F.D. Household Survey, 1985*, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, U. Mass. at Boston. A sample of over 2,000 households, carefully drawn to reflect Boston's household population, was questioned in the spring of 1980, to parallel the 1980 U.S. Census. In 1985, exactly five years later, the same methodology was employed again to obtain an update and to identify neighborhood shifts. This survey did not include the group quarters population

To learn more about changes in these planning districts by 1985, the several thousand observations available from the 1985 BRA/PFD Household Survey were differentiated to the limit. Knowing such changes as the shift in number of persons by race/ethnicity and age group in each district is valuable for planning. However, this divides the available data into so many cells that it limits reliability tests. The inferences should therefore be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

c) - *Boston's Changing Housing Patterns, 1970 to 1985*, Rolf Goetze, consultant to the B.R.A., November 1986. The 1980 U.S. Census does not specifically identify assisted dwelling units or the structure types within which they occur. It also does not indicate the type of stock in which condominiums are located, or when rental dwellings are in resident-owned structures. Therefore, available city data were carefully analyzed to obtain an overview and identify current housing patterns, as described in this source paper.

To aid in tracing the 1980 to 1985 changes in Table VIa, the housing stock was divided into units located in 1-4 unit structures, and those in 5 or more multi-unit structures. The 1-4s, dubbed **1-4(SF)** for single family, are largely singles, duplexes and triple-deckers, and tend to have a high rate of owner occupancy. **PrAptSF** designates the private apartments rented in this stock. In 1984, significant condominium conversion of triple-deckers commenced in some districts, shown as **CondoSF**.

Multifamily is designated as **5+(MF)**, and includes private rentals in this stock, **PrAptMF**, and condominiums, **CondoMF**, as well as public housing owned and managed by the Boston Housing Authority, **BHA**. Subsidized housing, **SubsHsg**, refers to privately-owned developments assisted under such federal programs as Section 221(d)(3), Section 236, and Section 8, as well as state assistance programs under EOCD and MHFA. The newly built assisted housing tends to be in multifamily structures, whereas the rehabilitated stock is more likely to be in 1-4 unit stock.

Table VIa also shows how the total stock in each time period is distributed, as well as the absolute and percent change.

d) - *U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1983*

e) - *A Summary and Survey of Development in Boston, 1975 - 1989*, John Avault and Mark Johnson, April 1987, based on compilations maintained on "ULTRALIST" by the BRA Research Department



















